DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 021 JC 930 214

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TITLE A Cultural Diversity Plan.
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (98th, Chicago, IL, April 4-6, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Cultural Awareness; Cultural Differences; *Cultural Interrelationships; *Cultural Pluralism; Ethnic Groups; Ethnic Relations; Intercultural Communication; *Intercultural Programs; Intergroup Education; Minority Groups; *Multicultural Education; Social Integration; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Beacon College Projects; Central Community College Platte Campus NE

ABSTRACT

In 1991, the Platte Campus of Central Community College (CCC) in Columbus, Nebraska, received a Beacon Grant to work with nine other colleges to promote cultural/work force diversity at the colleges and produce measurable results. The goals of the project were to expand programs to accommodate leadership diversity, design innovative staff development programs, develop personnel practices to enhance the recruitment and retention of women and minorities, provide in-service training in using curriculum components and classroom techniques that foster multicultural sensitivity, and disseminate information about project activities widely. The Platte Cultural Diversity Task Force Committee was formed to encourage campus-wide participation and support, educate campus leaders, and coordinate activities with other campuses. During 1991-92, the committee sponsored a variety of activities, including an area-wide meeting to explain the goals of the Beacon project; a series of lunches featuring traditional foods from various cultures; teleconferences on "Cultural Diversity in Teacher Preparation and Assessment" and "Sexual Harassment"; a screening of three films on women leaders in business; and the formation of a student task force on multicultural diversity. On October 29, 1992, 330 CCC staff members attended a one-day in-service program on diversity focusing primarily on inappropriate behaviors vis-a-vis diverse students/staff and legal concerns. In fall 1992, the Cultural Diversity Task Force became a permanent part of the Platte Campus Advisory and Communication System. Its plans are to encourage the development of different teaching styles, educate the campus community about diversity issues, and promote a proactive role in the recruitment and retention of a diverse population of employees and students. (MAB)

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ED356021

NCA
98th Annual Meeting
April 4-6, 1993
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Chicago, IL

"A Cultural Diversity Plan"

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OVERVIEW

Garry Trudeau, the "Doonesbury" cartoonist opened a speech for Yale University's class day with a parody of political correctness terms. This presentation is not meant to inculcate political correctness, but rather to illustrate how the Platte Campus of Central Community College (CCC) in Columbus, NE addressed diversity issues at an all-college (multi-campus) in-service and in other ways. It is perhaps fitting that our campus acronym is PC!

CCC's student base and staff base is changing in subtle yet inexorable ways. Meat-packing plants in Grand Island, Madison, and Schuyler have attracted Hispanic and Laotian employees who are settling in as permanent residents. Central NE is well-known for its ethnic enclaves--be they Czech, Polish, Swedish, Norwegian, etc. Agricultural communities and urban communities send us students. New industries from Chicago and Massachusetts have brought in new neighbors and fellow citizens with diverse backgrounds. For these reasons, Platte chose to focus on diversity through a campus-based cultural diversity committee. Our presentation will review the structure of our committee, 1991-92 activities and focus on our all-college in-service in the fall of 1992.

BEACON GRANT

Our campus recognized the needs of our growing diverse student body and the diversity in our employees; the Beacon Grant was a federal grant that addressed these needs. The Beacon Grant was awarded to 10 colleges who would work together and learn from each other for the purpose of identifying, promoting and producing measured results of cultural/work force diversity. CCC joined with Beacon grantee Metropolitan Technical Community College of Omaha. The grant did not provide us with a wealth of funds; it provided us with continuity and determination among our three campuses (Hastings and Grand Island being the other two). The period of the grant was from June of 1991 to November of 1992.

As a tool to monitor results, a survey was developed by Metropolitan Technical Community College. The first survey was administered to each college at the beginning of the grant period. This survey contained questions that revealed areas in our institutions where we could address cultural diversity awareness. To ascertain the growth in each institution after a year and a half of diversity programs, a second survey was conducted in November of 1992.

The goals of the grant were to expand planned programs to accommodate leadership diversity: design innovative staff development programs/activities encouraging the development of leadership; design personnel practices to enhance the recruitment and retention of women, persons of color, immigrants, the physically challenged and individuals of traditionally under-represented groups in leadership positions; provide faculty/counseling in-service in using curriculum components and classroom techniques that foster multicultural sensitivity; and provide widespread dissemination of project

activities and outcomes beyond the consortium to statewide, regional and national audiences.

As a result of this grant, all three campuses devoted interest in personnel and time to sensitizing our own environment to diversity. Words such as ethnocentrism, awareness, understanding, acceptance/respect, appreciating/valuing, selective adoption, multiculturalism became everyday language.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

The structure of the Platte Cultural Diversity Task Force Committee consisted of a chairperson and seven other members appointed by the campus president. Each member of the main diversity committee served as either a chair or co-chair on a sub-committee. There were four sub-committees formed: Gender Issues; Legal Issues; Ethnic Issues; Age Issues. Volunteer membership for the sub-committees was solicited from the Platte Campus staff, instructors, and administrators by sending out a request form to be signed and returned indicating first and second choice sub-committees that they would like to serve on.

The main diversity committee met once a month and sub-committees met anywhere from twice a month to several times each semester, depending on the type of programming that they had planned.

The original Cultural Diversity Task Force goals and objectives were:

Goals:

1. All employees of the Platte Campus will be participating in and/or supporting cultural diversity activities.

2. The campus and community will have established joint efforts in educating those in leadership roles to the necessary changes that must take place in the workplace.

3. Achievements will be shared with the other two campuses and activities on an area level will be coordinated.

Objectives:

1. Campus staff, faculty and administrators will be involved in personal cultural diversity awareness efforts. They will attend at least one of the following: all-campus activity; all-campus workshop; all-campus speaker presentation.

2. Through cooperative efforts, staff, faculty and administrators will find ways to identify and meet the needs of the institution's diverse student population.

3. The campus will affect community awareness and participation through all forms of media and by invitation to and involvement in as many campus diversity activities as possible.

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES FOR 1991-1992

The Committee sponsored a variety of diversity activities in 1991-1992.

June, 1991 - Area wide meeting in Grand Island. Overview of Beacon Grant, guest speakers, Michael R. Losey, President Society for Human Resource Management in Washington, D.C. and Dr. Bill Podraza, City Manager of Lexington, NE.

August, 1991 - The Area College Cabinet agreed to allot $5000 to be used for the enhancement of cultural diversity (C/D).

September, 1991 - First ethnic lunch was served on campus, a Mexican Fiesta Buffet. Conversational Spanish began this semester, the response was exhilarating.

October, 1991 - Dr. Richard Gilliland, President Metropolitan Community College was our guest speaker. His speech was entitled, "Beyond Affirmative Action: Leadership Diversity that Works."

October, 1991 - Shizuo Nakamura, Japanese exchange visitor, arrived in Columbus. He not only studied the customs of midwest America, he also taught a 6 week course entitled "Conversational Japanese" on two of our three campuses.

October, 1991 - Dr. Murray Jackson, professor from the University of Michigan and a published poet, presentation addressed the need for cultural diversity in our classrooms and on our campus.

October, 1991 - Teleconference "Cultural Diversity in Teacher Preparation and Assessment."

November, 1991 - Goals and objectives for cultural diversity on the Platte Campus were identified.

November, 1991 - Sharri Fletcher from the Omaha Police Department-Youth Intervention Unit, spoke to students, faculty and staff. This was co-sponsored by the Counseling Center, Residential Life Department and Cultural Diversity Task Force.

November, 1991 - This month's meal highlight was Oriental Cuisine Buffet.

January, 1992 - Three films, with emphasis on the role of women in leadership positions in business, were featured at a Popcorn Forum. Sponsored by the Gender Issues Committee.

February, 1992 - The College Cabinet adopts the Diversity Task Force Mission Statement:

> The mission of the Diversity Task Force is to identify opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of Central Community College in performing its role and mission by recognizing, supporting and valuing differences among individuals and the variety of contributions they make to the community.

February, 1992 - The College Cabinet integrates the diversity philosophy statement into the current CCC philosophy statement:

> Central Community College is committed to fostering human diversity within the college community. This commitment stems from the conviction that diversity is essential to creating an intellectual and social climate which promotes the freedom of thought, innovation and creativity that are fundamental to an academic community. Further, Central Community College has a responsibility to acknowledge this diversity and to nurture the sensitivity and mutual respect that are necessary characteristics of a community.

February, 1992 - NETCHE teleconference "Sexual Harassment", sponsored by Gender Issues Committee.

February, 1992 - Bette Novit Evans, associate professor from Creighton University came to campus with her presentation entitled, "Are You a Member of a Protected Class?" This was co-sponsored by the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Gender Equity Committee.

February, 1992- Dr. Oyekan Owomoyele, professor of African Literature in the English Dept. at the University of NE - Omaha Campus, a guest speaker. His presentation was entitled "Culturally Diversifying the Curriculum."

February, 1992 - Attorney Tom Maul, Legal Issues in Higher Education. He spoke to faculty, staff and administration regarding the issues that pertained to the Platte campus.

March, 1992 - Women's month was targeted by a display of pictures and script of women who have led our country with their determination, leadership and strength.

March, 1992 - Performing as "Woman In History," 12 Platte Campus female students individually played the part of a famous woman in history.

March, 1992 - Students form a Multi-Cultural Diversity Task Force. Geno Venegas, freshman at the Platte Campus, chairs this committee.

April, 1992 - Careers for women was the theme. Doris Lux, Director of Cooperative Education and member of the Gender Issues Committee designed the "Popcorn Forum's" schedule of films for this month. The series was entitled "Changing Careers."

April, 1992 - Hal S. Bertilson, Dean College of Natural and Social Sciences at the University of Nebraska, Kearney Campus, spoke to faculty, staff, administrators and area business and educators on human aggression. His presentation was entitled, "Sexual Harassment on Campus."

May, 1992 - Committee was selected and began work on the All-Campus Fall In-service, which took place on our campus.

May, 1992 - Graduation, Platte Campus and Shizuo Nakamura, our Japanese exchange visitor, received an honorary degree from Central Community College.

Along with the above events, the members of the cultural diversity task force often did daily talk spots on our local radio station,KLIR; and did presentations on our local cable network.

IN-SERVICE DAY (October 29, 1992)

The 330 CCC Staff were introduced to the diversity theme by Professor Liz Hawthorne of the University of Toledo, who had been instrumental in producing a 30-minute tape entitled "Succeeding in Culturally and Racially Diverse Environments". Liz described some of the students and community college staff in the tape and then showed the entire tape.

All staff had been sent diversity T-shirts prior to the In-Service. The logo for the T-shirt had been designed by a Platte drafting major (Ed Eaton) in a college-wide contest. The vast majority of staff wore the shirts you see us wearing today at the NCA meeting.

Staff normally anticipate In-Service opportunities with something less than rampant enthusiasm. Heeding one of their concerns, we organized the staff into peer groups so that people in like positions were in the small groups for the diversity exercise. Among the groups were Community Education/ABE, Learning Resources, Nursing, Business, Human Services, Maintenance, Student Services, Accounting, etc.

The Diversity Committee's first task was to select from the workbook, which accompanied the University of Michigan tape, an activity they adapted. The activity selected involved what most would consider inappropriate behavior (dysfunctional behavior) exhibited by college staff or witnessed by college staff vis-a-vis diverse students/staff. The second task for the committee was to gather a group of 22 facilitators to conduct the small peer group sessions (groups ranged from 10-25 members). The brainstorming to select facilitators was itself worthwhile as the committee was pleasantly surprised at how diverse the community already was. Group facilitators included two Hispanic students from Platte, an Hispanic manager from a power company, the Columbus Mayor, an Italian engineer from a manufacturing company in Columbus, a Greek technician from a power company, a Chinese executive assistant from a swine unit company, a Filipino nurse who is a Platte alumna, an Hispanic baseball player from the San Diego Padres system, a Black Platte employee (also a Chicago transplant alluded to earlier), and a variety of community leaders--a Minister, the Chamber of Commerce executive, an Investment Broker, and

several Platte Administrators.

Key to the success of the In-Service was a training session for each facilitator prior to the In-Service. The entire group of facilitators went through the Dysfunctional Behavior Exercise which CCC staff experienced. Facilitators shared experiences they had had which involved dysfunctional behavior--be it performing industrial recruitment, changing schools, carrying out career assignments, etc.

On the day of the In-Service, the small groups had lunch together at scattered sites around the campus. After lunch, the facilitators joined their small groups and conducted one hour of the exercise. Sal Soltero, the minor league baseball player, was especially creative in that he started with a diversity quiz; the three winners each received one of the autographed baseball cards.

Each group handed in a summary of salient comments from the exercise. It was interesting to note that when the entire CCC staff returned to the theatre, there was still buzzing of conversation at 2:15 p.m. Usually by this time of day of In-Service, the staff is edging toward the door for rides home to Hastings (100 miles) or Grand Island (75 miles). This was not the case; this is why we believe this exercise can be easily replicated in other colleges.

Liz Hawthorne gave a brief summary of the day and the In-Service concluded with a short speech by a local attorney relative to legal issues and diversity. We suggest more time for total group interaction after the small group exercise with reports from a panel of facilitators.

WHERE WE ARE AT AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

The Cultural Diversity Task Force evolved into a permanent committee. A resolution to become a part of the Platte Campus Advisory and Communication System (Campus Council) passed in September of 1992. Inclusion into the process of reviewing and formulating the college's policies and procedures has given the committee the credibility, visibility and access to the college's leadership that it needed to become an effective change agent.

Through in-service activities, speakers, teleconferences, etc., the present committee has adopted and pursued the following goals:

1. Encourage the development of different teaching styles to accommodate learning styles and the needs of special populations through instructor training and faculty and student communication forums.

2. Educate present and future employers/employees about diversity issues.

3. Promote a proactive role in the recruitment and retention of a diverse population of employees/students.

4. Continue to stimulate multicultural/diversity awareness within the college and community.

5. Continue to strive to create within our own institution, the community and area businesses/industry supportive environments where the uniqueness of the whole person is valued and each is encouraged to reach his/her full potential as a student, family member, employee, actualized person, citizen, and member of a global society.

This last fall we were given an opportunity to educate the CCC Board of Governors about diversity and activities that have occurred on all three campuses. Two of our in-service facilitators (a male Hispanic student, and a Black female employee) explained the All-College In-Service activities and what the In-Service and being part of the day meant to them. The Board was presented with the In-Service materials, comments from the activity, and personal copies of the book Beyond Race and Gender, by Roosevelt Thomas. The Board's reaction to the presentation was positive.

The committee appreciates the role that the college plays in shaping attitudes and cultivating tolerance. We are constant in our attentiveness to find ways to weave some aspect of celebrating and valuing our diversity and our similarities into everything that occurs on campus.

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